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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2009

In Today's Papers

Erdogan to Meet with DTP Officials
All papers and TV channels: PM Erdogan will meet pro-Kurdish DTP officials today regarding the Kurdish issue at noon at the Parliament. Erdogan said "I do not equate the DTP with the PKK. I would meet with the other parties too if they did not close their doors." Mainstream Vatan quotes PM Erdogan as saying, "I will meet DTP leader Ahmet Turk as the leader of the AKP, not as the prime minister." "The day after the DTP asked for appointment from my office, ten soldiers were martyred. I could not meet with the DTP when we had ten martyrs. Nevertheless, I don't see the DTP and the PKK on the same line. The DTP is a political party that is represented in the parliament", Erdogan added.

In a related story, mainstream Hurriyet reports that AKP's candidate for parliament speaker and former justice minister Mehmet Ali Sahin visited the DTP yesterday and asked for support.

Editorials on The Kurdish Issue

Okay Gonensin wrote in mainstream Vatan: "The meeting between PM Erdogan and DTP leader Turk is very important for the future course of the settlement process regarding the Kurdish issue. It also brings some responsibilities for concerned parties. For instance, the DTP should start giving positive and encouraging messages right after this meeting while the main opposition CHP should not rule out any possibility to cooperate with this settlement process."

Muharrem Sarikaya wrote in tabloid/mass appeal HaberTurk: "PM Erdogan is making a mistake by alienating the MHP from the process. Both CHP and MHP can be critical of the initiatives but they have to be included in the process. Sooner or later, the Kurdish initiative will come to the parliament platform as constitutional changes and the government will be in need of the opposition's cooperation."

Metin Munir wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "There are no substantive talks with the DTP or the PKK, and without substance, the current effort cannot go anywhere. The government has drawn its lines in the sand by refusing to negotiate with terrorists and therefore forgetting the experiences other countries have had with domestic

terrorism. Solving the Kurdish problem in real terms requires courageous political leadership. In our case, it seems what we have are only some cosmetic efforts."

Ali Bulac wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "The government's Kurdish initiative is a very important development, however there are some mistakes as it moves forward. The journalists who were invited to the 'brainstorming session' at Ankara's police academy were limited to certain voices and attitudes. It's always nice to hear their opinions again and again, but the Kurdish initiative cannot be successful unless all views, no matter what, are represented and heard properly."

Turkish Armed Forces' (TSK) New Positions Announced

All papers and TV channels: The Supreme Military Council (YAS) decisions were made public yesterday and there were no surprises in the command chain, mainstream Vatan and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet report. According to YAS decisions Chief of General Staff General Ilker Basbug, Land Forces Commander General Isik Kosaner and Gendarmerie Forces Commander General Atilla Isik will remain in their positions one more year. Admiral Esref Ugur Yigit replaced Naval Forces Commander Metin Atac and General Hasan Aksay became the new Air Forces Commander replacing Aydogan Babaoglu. Cumhuriyet notes that Navy Colonel Levent Gorgec, whose name was mentioned in Ergenekon case, has been appointed as Admiral. Navy Colonel Dursun Cicek who was accused of drafting an action plan to fight fundamentalists acts, was not promoted. The General Staff said in its internet site that Colonel Cicek was not promoted as there were not any vacant positions.

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Putin to Visit Ankara on Thursday

Media outlets report that on Thursday, the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will pay a one-day working visit to Ankara to discuss the Blue Stream-2 pipeline, the Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, the Nabucco project and the construction of a nuclear power plant in Turkey. Putin is also expected to raise issues regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, the ties between Turkey and Armenia, Iran, Iraq and the Middle East, according to papers.

In a related story, business daily Referans reports Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz as saying that Russia was interested in supplying the Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, and that the two countries were going to sign a protocol about the pipeline. Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko came to Turkey before Putin to discuss the issue, says Referans.

Fresh Greek-Turkish Dispute over Karaada Islet Resolved

Vatan, Milliyet, Aksam, Cumhuriyet, Haberturk, and Zaman report five Turkish nationals, including three journalists, were taken into custody by Greek coast guard while attempting to go to the islet of Karaada which lies off Turkey's Mediterranean coast. In "Greece Detains Turkish Journalists," mainstream Haberturk writes on its front page, "This time the crisis between Turkey and Greece is over Karaada. Greek soldiers detained Turkish journalists, the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) intervened, and the Turks were freed." In addition, the paper says, "FM Bakoyannis Cut Short Her Vacation," as, "The Greek media reports she will return to Athens due to 'tensions with Turkey.'" In "A Greek Game on Karaada," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports Turkish reporters and their ship's captain were all detained by the Greek military when they attempted to take photos of the soldiers on Karaada from their boat. Mainstream Sabah's front page says "Telephone diplomacy between the two countries solved the crisis." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "It looks like we were on the brink of a crisis like the one with Greece in January 1996 over Kardak (Imia)." However, "The MFA got involved and the journalists who were detained were freed." In the front-page headline, "A 'False' Crisis in The Mediterranean," mainstream Milliyet notes the MFA downplayed the 'detention' aspect of the story by saying "there were no arrests or detentions of Turkish citizens."

NATO's Rasmussen to Visit Turkey During Ramadan

Mainstream Sabah says NATO's new Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen would come to Turkey at the end of August as the guest of

Prime Minister Erdogan. Rasmussen will begin his tour as NATO SG by visiting Washington, and then Ankara. After Ankara, Rasmussen will proceed to Athens, according to Sabah.

Resistance is An Option

Media note Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told his Fatah movement conference on Tuesday that Palestinians sought peace with Israel but "resistance" remained an option. Mainstream Sabah headlines, "Mahmoud Abbas: We Have a Legal Right to Resistance." Islamist-oriented Zaman labeled Abbas' statements, "Fatah's Peace-Resistance Dance." Leftist Taraf notes "The Arafat Generation in Fatah Is Putting their Foot Down," as "The old generation, of Yasar Arafat's armed struggle, could split with the new generation," who back peace talks. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet notes, "Fatah met for a party congress for the first time on Palestinian soil since the PLO was founded in 1959." Mainstream CNNTurk notes, "Fatah Met for its First Party Congress after a 20-Year Break."

Bill Clinton's North Korea Surprise (Taraf)

Media credit former U.S. president Bill Clinton with persuading North Korea to release two detained American journalists. Mainstream Sabah headlines, "Clinton Is in North Korea," and, "Two American Journalists Are Freed." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "Secretary Clinton's husband, former U.S. president Bill Clinton, succeeded in securing the release of two American journalists who had been imprisoned by North Korea for five months." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines, "Clinton Aptly Intervenes In

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the Journalists' Crisis." Liberal Radikal headlines, "Bill Clinton's North Korean Conquest," and the article notes, "Clinton went to North Korea, met with President Kim Jong Il, and had two American journalists released from prison." Radikal also calls the journalists, "Al Gore's correspondents." Mainstream Hurriyet headlines, "Clinton Rescues the Journalists." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "Clinton's Visit Sufficed," as, "The Journalists Were Pardoned."

A Congratulations Embargo To Ahmadinejad from The U.S. and Europe (Zaman)

Media are mixed in their reactions to the U.S. and the West's response to Ahmadinejad's recently certified victory in the Iranian presidential elections. Mainstream NTV reports in "The U.S. Also Approves Ahmadinejad!" that "The U.S. administration also highlights Ahmadinejad as the 'elected leader' of Iran." Mainstream Haberturk reports in "No Celebration for Ahmadinejad," that, "Western countries are not celebrating Ahmadinejad's second term as president." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports in "A Congratulations Embargo To Ahmadinejad from The U.S. and Europe," that, "No congratulations are coming from the West to Ahmadinejad for his second term."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- The ruling AKP's candidate for Parliament Speaker, Mehmet Ali Sahin, is expected to be elected Wednesday in the third round of voting, in which a candidate needs 267 votes to become parliament speaker. On Tuesday, the pro-Kurdish DTP's candidate Hasip Kaplan has withdrawn from the race, saying he will support Sahin.
- The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) has expressed concern about the eviction of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem.
- Turkey's Economy Coordination Board decides to hold a meeting with the representatives of the tourism sector.
- Of the USD 62.3 billion of Turkish imports over the first six months of the year, 49.4 percent of the imports came from six countries -- Russia, Germany, China, the U.S., Italy and France.

World

- Greek Cyprus President Christofias says Turkey holds the key for solving the Cyprus issue, adding that the international community

should press Turkey to agree to a settlement in favor of the Cypriots.

- Russian troops in South Ossetia are put on "increased combat readiness" amid rising tensions on the de facto border with Georgia.

- At least 350 women were slayed in honor killings in northern Iraq over the last six months.

- The U.S. Marine Corps has issued an administrative directive, saying it banned the use of Marine network for accessing such sites as Facebook.

JEFFREY